

Global Recruitment

Guide to UAE

douglas
scott 

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Introduction to the United Arab Emirates

The UAE is an amalgamation of seven separate political entities, each a constitutional monarchy under a federal umbrella. This region historically holds great significance both from a cultural and economic perspective. Ancient cities settled here over 5000 years ago, consequently the rich Arab and Islamic culture is steeped in the daily lives of modern Emiratis who protect their heritage with pride. These regions are centrally ruled by the President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan from the capitol of Abu Dhabi, but the other Emirates retain independence in most matters, allowing for familiar yet nuanced explorations from city to city.

The distinctive nature of this region is coloured by its more recent history of British influence. In 1892, in fear of encroaching Ottoman power, the many Sheikdoms of the area decided to sign the British-Trucial Sheikdoms treaty. Although it limited who these states could have relations with, it provided both land and naval protection in the region; thereby safeguarding British trading routes whilst providing military support to the Emirates. By 1966 the British government realized it was no longer viable to have such an extensive military presence in the region, and the deadline for ending the treaty was 1971. By December of that year Abu Dhabi and Dubai had come to an agreement in the hopes of attracting the other Emirates as well. Four joined, forming the UAE, with Ras Al-Khaimah entering the following year.

The total population of the UAE in 2010 was recorded at just over 8 million people, most of which are located in the larger municipalities such as Dubai. However, even though five of the Emirates excluding Dubai and Abu Dhabi do not enjoy the same degree of international commercial attention, they have much to offer and are capitalizing on their ingenuity for development. That said, the recent events of the Arab Spring and the fallout from the 2008 financial crisis did hamper the boom, however, recovery has taken hold and the UAE has ridden out the storm. As analysts forecasted a dreaded future previously, global progression out of the recession period has reflected a renewed confidence in the eastern market. Abu Dhabi and Dubai are the focus, but you shouldn't discount the other Emirates, least of all what they offer in terms of tourism, business, and investment.

Fujairah:

The last to join the UAE in 1902, Fujairah is situated next to Oman on the eastern coast and is not connected to the Persian Gulf. Historical sites dot the land and the oldest Mosque in the UAE, built in 1446, can be found here. Like many of the lesser known Emirates there is not a significant local population, with the last estimate at 152,000 residents. Unlike the other kingdoms, the topography is uniquely mountainous compared to the temperamental deserts found westward. The Hajar Mountain range is accompanied by rainfall during certain times of the year, experiencing more precipitation than all the other Emirates. Pivotaly located next to the Gulf of Oman, Fujairah has traditionally been a popular stop off port before voyages to and from India. Traders seeking resupply before long trips would often anchor in this conveniently located oasis. In recent years, much like Dubai and other Emirates, Fujairah has taken great pains to produce a business friendly environment to increase foreign investment.

Ras al-Khaimah:

Relatively larger than Fujairah, the population is between 250,000 and 300,000 people. The general perception of the UAE can be boiled down to oil driven industry, however this municipality is unique in that it is not a producer of oil. Still, there's no need to panic and run for the hills, this Emirate has invested heavily into its industrial production in the sectors of real estate, manufacturing, tourism, building materials such a ceramics & cement, and the high-tech industry. Tourism has been especially focused on with many 5 star hotels, beach resorts, and development of infrastructure in part due to their incredibly pro-business policies. While many know of the income tax exemption benefits of the UAE, they seldom realize the import duties put on commodities, which can be quite high. However, Ras al-Khaimah not only doesn't have income tax, but there are no import, withholding or export taxes either. As the city grows, so too has the cultural influence, with the Ras al-Khaimah Half Marathon attracting some of the world's best runners, and the UAE Awafi Festival which offers a fun family environment in the red dunes of the desert. Many attend annually to enjoy the safe, cheap (if not free) festivities. The festival is well received and considered a must for many in the UAE and the Gulf region.

Umm al-Quwain:

The least populated of the Emirates with roughly 60,000 people, Umm al-Quwain retains a niche economy focused on tourism. Off the Gulf coast, sandwiched between Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah, this small power is characterized by its commitment to providing an experience unlike any other. Intense investment into their main industry has prompted numerous construction projects, including that of the Dreamland Aqua Park along the coast, completed in 1997 with the express goal of being one of the largest (250,000 square metres!) and most visited attractions in the UAE. You will also enjoy the beautiful islands that house bird reserves and are famed for their mangrove swamps. Coastal development has boosted the tourism industry immensely in recent years, and it doesn't hurt that they enjoy cool sea breezes during the hot days.

Sharjah:

Originally a wealthy trading stop off, more recently development in Sharjah was based in oil & gas, but slowly transitioned to tourism as the main driving force of this commercial city. With free zones akin to Dubai, there has been a reliance on foreign investment to further develop infrastructure for the various resorts, hotels, and attractions. In spite of the fact that this is the only Emirate in which alcohol is banned, has the strictest conservative dress codes and rules governing male and female interaction, it still garners 2 million visitors a year on its incredible tourism offerings. In 1998 Sharjah was named UNESCO's Cultural Capital of the Arab World, with over 20 museums in the city as the ruler Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammad al Qasimi has committed himself to the development and historical preservation of Arab and other cultures. More recently a bus system has been implemented to connect the many undertakings across the city and Emirate. However, taxis are available at reasonable rates. Sharjah has also hosted the FI Motorboat Race since 2000 which is held in the winter during the Sharjah Water Festival.

Ajman:

The tiniest Emirate by area at just 100 square miles, the majority of the population lives in the city which is part of the Dubai-Sharjah-Ajman metropolitan area. There are roughly 1600 taxis providing transportation. Rates range between Dh4-10 depending on time of day and they are often used for intercity travel and cheap local commutes. The population increase is a recent phenomenon mostly due to the business policies that are uncharacteristic of the Emirates. Going against the grain, Ajman is the only Emirate offering all investors the ability to have complete and transparent freehold ownership on real estate. This is huge in the UAE, in which Emirates bar foreigners from buying property, with a few excepted areas. Opening the doors to outside wealth served Ajman well, but it did suffer in the wake of the 2008 crash. Regardless, such a business friendly policy has ushered resurgence in investment, picking up old projects where they left off and planning new ones.

Abu Dhabi & Dubai:

Thus far, we have covered 5 of the 7 Emirates, the last of which are arguably of greatest interest. Although Abu-Dhabi is the capitol, Dubai rivals the cultural, political, and economic influence of the other Emirates. We will mainly focus on Abu Dhabi, but there is a great deal of commonality between the two Emirates, and consequently Dubai will be discussed as required.

The Legal Market

Pre-2008 the bustling economy of these cities inspired confidence and investment within the region, however after the crash the subsequent economic fallout led to a contraction within the legal industry (among others). Firms either outright left or decreased their staff in fear of fiscal risk and absence of fortuitous business opportunities. This period was difficult worldwide, but slowly recovery has taken hold. More recently, the sands have shifted and the world is once again converging to the UAE's re-emerging tourism, real-estate, and commercial markets. Businesses are expanding and if not already there, many law firms have followed the wealth and continued where they left off. As such, opportunities are available for those willing to go. Political unrest, in part due to the Arab Spring has dissuaded international lawyers from applying for jobs in the GCC, however, for the most part the UAE has contained itself from the effects of these events. As the memory and fear of 2008 abates, more and more lawyers are starting to realize that the momentum has swung and that it's time to head back to Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Immigration

Entry Requirements

The UAE designates a list of exempt countries that will be issued a free visa upon arrival. These last for 14 days, to enjoy a longer visit you may apply for a longer stay visa, but you could incur charges. See the following link for information on which countries benefit from free entry and more details on longer term stay:

<http://www.uaeinteract.com/travel/visas.asp>

Employer Sponsorship

Those who gain employment in the UAE tend to secure it before entering the country. We do not recommend obtaining a 14 or 30 day visa to seek a job. Not to mention the tight constraint of time, you are unlikely to find anything without local knowledge and networks. An employer can sponsor you long-term with the following:

1. Photocopy of passport
2. A completed and signed copy of a Visit Visa Application form by your employer
3. Photocopy of the trade license of the company
4. A letter from your employer guaranteeing their responsibility for you during your stay.

Non-Exempt Nations

We recommend that you check with the proper authority depending on where you are applying from. This may incur costs and limitations. We would love to advise further, but these can be particular to your nationality.

Entry Limitations

Those with an Israeli stamp on their passports will be denied a visa into the country.

Exit Requirements

You may not exit the country without the permission of your sponsor. This means that any time you wish to visit somewhere or perhaps go to your home country, you will require express consent from your employer. Some higher level employees arrange multi-entry/exit visas so they can come and go as they please, however we recommend speaking with your sponsor regarding acceptable terms for this issue.

If you have any outstanding debt or criminal charges you will not be allowed to leave the country until they are settled.

Culture & Law

Religion:

The predominant religion in the UAE is Islam with the further distinction of a Sunni majority over those who are Shiite Muslims. While the UAE is fairly tolerant of other faiths, especially Abrahamic ones, the official religion of the state is Islam. Most religions although recognized, play a diminished role from a political and cultural perspective. For instance, attempting to convert any Muslim is prohibited, but conversions to Islam are encouraged. The government has adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards minority religions, so long as they do not interfere with Islamic practices or followers. Only Muslims can be recognized as citizens of the UAE, further, the state has a great deal of control of the Sunni mosques across the country as virtually all Sunni Imams are employed by the government. Shiite Muslims also have their own mosques but retain more independence than Sunni ones. However, even with these cultural considerations, the UAE has an open mind to other peoples and beliefs, but we do encourage you not to be too vocal about them. Religious tension is typically sourced from conflicting ideologies since politics, economics, and faith are inextricably linked; for the Emiratis the chances of disagreement are greater. Typically, as long as you do not appear to violate their norms and do not engage in proselytizing, you are unlikely to face any issues. Other faiths include Christianity (majority Protestant and Roman Catholic), Hinduism, Sikhism, Baha'ism, Jainism, and a few other minority groups. Judaism is accepted due to the historical connection and source of the Abrahamic faiths, but Jewish observers are asked to be discrete, not due to blatant anti-Semitism, but rather because of the polarized attitudes towards Israel. Likewise, anyone with an Israeli stamp on their passport is denied entry into the country.

There are places of worship for non-Muslims designated by the Sheikh, but there are proportionality discrepancies as to the number of areas of worship relative to the number of devotees. For instance, Christians make up a small part of the religious minority in the UAE, but they have significantly more places of worship than the Hindus who outnumber them by quite a margin. Lastly, all public education will have an Islamic influence which is in part why most expatriates send their children to private schools which may have religious affiliations.

Ramadan: During this period most shops and restaurants will be closed until sundown when Muslims break their fast. Most bars, clubs, restaurants etc. will be closed during. Although expats have options, the majority of the cities will be abstaining from business (during certain times) or non-religious celebration. Please familiarize yourself with the local customs and practices as this is a holy period for prayer and reflection. Ramadan lasts about one month and concludes with Eid.

Regular Dress:

Luckily Abu Dhabi and Dubai have more relaxed attitudes towards clothing choices, but do

be wary that dressing inappropriately is a violation of decency laws. Sharjah is a unique case as they have stricter rules for modesty. The general rule for most is do not expose too much skin, meaning wearing short shorts, a bikini, or displaying yourself in a sexualized or provocative manner. Do not wear tight fitting or see-through clothing. This is the official stance but is reflected in the attitudes of the local populace. Since there is such a large ex-pat population, there appears to be some leeway for these rules, but have been known to be used in certain altercations. Ultimately, the populace may turn a blind eye to some of your clothing choices, but you should avoid conflict with anyone who points out their discomfort with your attire. The police may get involved and you could be charged with public indecency. You should be sensitive to complainants concerns and offer to remedy your outfit. Although a desire to enforce this law does not appear to be rampant and is usually reserved for extreme cases.

Local Customs & Courtesies:

So far we have covered a great deal that can be encompassed in this category, but you should be aware that the cultural considerations mentioned are rooted in your day to day interactions with locals and foreign Muslims alike. When invited to their home, you should first greet the host and then everyone else. As enthusiastic handshakes are a western custom, in this culture a short gentle handshake is more subtly used. The usual greeting is “salaam aleikum” (peace be upon you), with the appropriate reply of “aleikum assalaam” (and on you peace). Men should also be wary of their interactions with women as extended stares or touching are not acceptable behaviours. If a woman offers you a handshake you may do so with the above caveat, any further physical interaction should be minimal. Women should also observe a reserved disposition in this regard, anything that can be construed as overly affectionate with the opposite sex will not be appreciated. In more private circumstances, women do greet one another with a small kiss on the cheek. Lastly, left-handers like me should be wary of using their right hand for handshakes and eating as the left can be seen as dirty and used for ‘personal grooming’.

While enjoying the company of your hosts do express a gracious demeanour and do not cross your legs or point your feet in anyone’s direction; this is seen as a deep sign of disrespect. Showing the soles of your feet to another is akin to using a rude gesture in the west, keep your feet planted on the ground!

Alcohol:

Laws governing the sale and consumption of alcohol are fairly uniform across the UAE however there is a notable exception is Sharjah where it is illegal. The drinking age in Abu Dhabi is 18 but has been informally enforced at 21 in certain establishments. Dubai and the other Emirates set the age at 21. There are many hotels, bars, and clubs situated in particular areas that any non-Muslim can enjoy; Muslims are not allowed to drink. Although opportunities are provided for you to partake, do note that you cannot drink on the streets or display any degree of public intoxication.

If you wish to consume alcohol within your home or that of another, you may apply for an alcohol licence. The rules are as follows for its use:

- You may not use more than 20% of your base salary to purchase alcohol
- Purchases are for personal consumption only, no resale is allowed
- With a licence you may consume alcohol at your residence, or at another residence where you are a guest
- Alcohol may not be displayed or carried in public
- You may only purchase alcohol from a state approved and licenced store

Do be wary that public intoxication is punishable, and that there is a zero tolerance policy for drinking and driving (any amount). Further, drinking without a licence can result in heavy fines or even prison.

Lifestyle

Shopping in Abu Dhabi:

While previously most had to travel to Dubai to enjoy any substantive shopping, a lot has changed over the years and now Abu Dhabi is an excellent place to explore for merchandise. Traditionally Abu Dhabi has had open marketplaces called 'souqs', akin to a flea market where you can find a great variety of traders and food vendors. These shops are usually open from 10am -10pm or later on weekends, although some businesses close for an extended lunch from 1-4 pm. Venturing into the souq is a unique and eye-opening experience for the culturally uninitiated, the sights, smells, and sounds give you a flavour for the history and depth of the people while you enjoy the modernity of Abu Dhabi.

For those seeking a mainstream shopping experience, Abu Dhabi has two major malls, Marina Mall and AD Mall. Some of the offerings at Marina include:

- Dior
- Forever 21
- Prada
- Hugo Boss
- Timberland
- Armani Exchange
- Burberry
- H&M
- Marks & Spencer
- Gucci
- Rockport
- Omega
- Adidas
- Manchester City Store

Abu Dhabi Mall:

- Baskin Robbins
- Boots Pharmacy
- Cold Stone Creamery
- Kenneth Cole
- Lacoste
- HSBC
- la Vie en Rose
- Mango
- MAC Cosmetics
- Nike
- Oakley
- Rolex
- Sephora
- Tiffany & Co

Shopping in Dubai:

We could dedicate a separate guide to this topic alone as Dubai is well known for its amazing offerings to tourists and locals alike. We've mentioned some of the places to shop in Abu Dhabi to give you a better idea of the scene. We would love to do the same for Dubai, but choosing from over 1200+ stores in the Dubai Mall alone is no easy task! Touted as the largest mall in the

world, there is something for everyone. Some of the features of this mall will be discussed in the Leisure section.

The Gold Souk: A modern touch on an ancient market, the Gold Souk couples the variety and splendour of the bazaar in a convenient and comfortable setting. You can find almost anything in the mall, but this area is well noted for its jewellery. No cost was spared in the construction and as such this part of the mall is not only an incredible shopping experience, but one of aesthetic excellence.

Food Court: While not usually a highlight or focus of a mall visit, the Dubai Mall is different in that it has made painstaking efforts to offer as much variety as possible. Here you can find local, Mexican, and Indian - just about anything really!

Mall of Arabia: While not nearly as large, this alternative has its own offerings including a theme park, earth and science museum, and planetarium.

Travel:

Local flights are relatively cheap considering the distances between Gulf States are not too great. For instance, you can get a flight in and out of Dubai and Bahrain for a weekend well under £100. Air traffic between GCC nations is extensive as the oil and real estate boom has created a relaxed cross border culture. Many people travel within the Gulf area to enjoy the wonderful historical landmarks and fare offered by the bustling cities.

Accommodation costs can vary depending on where you go, but generally is a greater expense. Hostels in this part of the world are virtually unheard of, further, if you are looking to enjoy a short period in the UAE, Qatar etc. you will soon find yourself spending relatively more than you would for other destinations. That said, the low cost of airfare can offset those expenses for an enjoyable trip. Ultimately, how much you wish to spend is up to you.

Among your options are: the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, and Egypt. You'll find that Egypt is relatively cheaper than the other Gulf States, but do be wary of the political climate before visiting.

Once you've arrived local travel can vary in price depending on where you are. However, considering the large oil subsidies in places like the UAE, a taxi ride is not at an unreasonable cost. Although you save on flights, one should not underestimate the higher cost of enjoying this region- arguably well worth it though!

Leisure & Local Attractions:

There is plenty to do with many clubs on offer for children and adults alike.

Abu Dhabi

Zayed Grand Mosque: Completed in 2007, covering an area of 22,412 square metres and an

estimated capacity of 41,000 people, this is one of the largest religious and architectural wonders in the world. No expense was spared to get the best artists, craftsmen, and architects to create a building that not only reflects the ambitions of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, but is also a creative and intelligent adaptation of religious history and philosophy. For example, the lighting system is designed to mimic phases of the moon. Stunning blue clouds with hues of grey are projected on to the walls and vary in brightness according to the lunar position. You should also be aware that how you dress is important (conservatively), but do not worry, they do provide garments if required. Lastly, while you are welcome to take pictures, do respect those there to pray and abstain from upsetting the deliberately meditative setting.

Ferrari World: Leave it to the UAE to build a facility dedicated to Ferrari - and the largest indoor theme park at that! Home to the Formula Rossa the world's fastest roller coaster, there is much to do and see for a memorable outing.

Leisure: Here is a short list of some of the activities/clubs you can enjoy:

- Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club
- Tours & Safaris
- Soccer Schools
- Gymnastics Clubs
- Yachting, Sailing, & Kayaking
- Diving & Fishing
- Yas Marina Circuit- events and go karting
- Many sports & niche clubs

Dubai

Dubai Aquarium: Situated within Dubai Mall, this gargantuan facility has a 10 million litre tank full of thousands of different kinds of wildlife. Enjoy a casual stroll through a glass tunnel that enshrouds you from the world and gives the feeling of walking along the ocean floor. If that isn't a good enough view, you can always dive with the sharks (with or without a cage)! Perhaps a little too close for comfort? Take a ride over the massive tank and bask in the breath-taking ocean life through glass bottom boats.

Burj Khalifa: Construction began in 2004 and the tower was opened to the public in 2010. It is now the tallest free standing structure in the world. Built to withstand high altitude winds the tower has many sharp edges that are uncharacteristic of the past decades. Soaring an incredible 2km upward, this is truly a must-see in Dubai.

Leisure: Offerings are similar to those available in Abu Dhabi. Given the variety we are confident

that you will find something that suits you.

Quality of life & Costs

Abu Dhabi: When most of us think of the UAE and its grandeur, our expectations for costs are quite high. Rightly so, it can get quite expensive, but how does Abu Dhabi fare next to London? Surprisingly, London is significantly more costly, with many items and services ranging 20-50% more expensive. However, if you are seeking a taste of the high life you will have to dig deep into your pockets.

Here is a list of some of the more expensive commodities or services (compared to London):

Alcohol: As is the case with a good deal of GCC countries, alcohol has heavy duties imposed on it. Oddly enough, some types of alcohol are comparatively similar to London prices.

Internet: Although the quality is good, internet can cost you more than twice what you would pay in London. Still, this one high cost is well offset by the savings opportunities in other areas.

Luxury Items/Services: Sport and leisure activities can be quite expensive as there are entire industries built around high end living.

Dubai: Considering their proximity, Dubai is almost the same in respect to cost, but there is a significant mark-up for alcohol.

Healthcare:

Abu Dhabi: It is illegal in Abu Dhabi to be uninsured as an expat. Insurance is typically provided through an employer but may not cover your entire family or the totality of cost. Be sure to check and negotiate coverage for your dependants. You cannot renew your visa without medical insurance. The quality of healthcare is quite high as the UAE is a popular medical tourism destination for the region.

Dubai: Similar to Abu Dhabi in quality and service, Dubai does not have any law that forces expats to buy health insurance. However, the costs for paying out of pocket are high and it is well worth insuring yourself, getting insured by an employer, or both.

Since most expats negotiate their contracts with employers before heading to the UAE, this is not a significant hurdle and it is often expected that at the very least employers pay in a portion of the costs. Public healthcare does exist, but you may be denied service if you are found to have private insurance. Considering that 80% of the population is foreign it is unsurprising that the government has tried to rein in costs associated with publically accessible healthcare.

Property and Residence:

Car: Buying a car is quite expensive and we encourage you to either rent until you find a good deal or buy second hand. Do be sure to seek a warranty as the desert can be quite hard on vehicles. Also, be wary of overspending - falling into debt in this part of the world is not a

pleasant affair.

Home: Many ex-pats initially rent homes, villas, or compounds. Ownership used to be rare as the government has taken measures to limit the amount of land foreigners could own. Changes in the law in 2002 (for Dubai only) have allowed expats to buy and have created a real-estate and construction boom. Prices can vary as land is a larger expense in this part of the world. We recommend holding off on buying right away as it is not only costly, but how you apportion your assets may affect taxation should you decide to return to your home country. You may wish to be mindful of ex-pat populated areas to seek accommodation; there you will likely find the amenities and community you require for an easier transition.

More recently Abu Dhabi has relaxed its laws on freehold property ownership and there are some designated areas where expats may purchase.

Education:

This is an expensive endeavour, but one that is well worth the money. Ex-pats send their children to private schools and usually pay out of pocket. This can be unappealing for families but you do get a high quality of education. Private schools in Abu Dhabi and Dubai are excellent by most standards and students are known to perform exceptionally. You may choose to have your child follow the curriculum of your home country, for example, British schools offer GCSE's and A-levels, while American counterparts provide the high school certificate. However, in order for accreditation in Abu Dhabi, certain core subjects such as Arabic must be taught. Dubai has no such restriction but does not allow you to switch schools mid-year. You are further encouraged to start the enrolment process as early as possible.

Taxes:

Although there is no income tax in either Emirate there are some municipal and goods taxes (usually luxury items). Alcohol has a 30% sales tax, and you will notice a 5% charge at hotels and certain entertainment venues. Cigarettes also have a sales tax imposed on them. Custom duties are usually 4% and 10% for luxury goods. Otherwise your concern should be how your earnings are transferred to non-UAE accounts. Depending on your home country, you may be subject to taxation on assets brought back. For example, although returning to the UK with income is not typically taxed, depending on the vehicle you use to move your assets, you may be subject to capital gains tax in the UK. Prudence, insofar as referring to a financial specialist, is highly recommended.

Americans: For US expats and their spouses the laws for taxation in the US have recently changed and affect your income while working abroad. It is far too detailed to discuss here, but we insist that you check with a tax specialist before making any decisions.

Safety:

Criminal behaviour is not commonplace and the cities are mostly safe. Women should take extra care at night and are encouraged to use a trusted taxi service home. Be wary of the changing winds in the wake of the Arab Spring, although there is no immediate threat, you should be aware of daily news which can affect local sensitivities.

Utilities:

Abu Dhabi: Infrastructure for utilities is quite good with easy access to water and electricity. Getting connected is fairly easy, but you will need to put in a deposit. Although the water is safe to drink, you may not prefer the taste and many have regular water deliveries. If you do opt for the latter option do be sure to check the seals when delivered as some dealers have been known to fill bottles with tap water. The Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Department (ADWEA) will make a visit every two months to check your meter and you are consequently billed every other month.

Electricity runs at 220/240 volts, both double and triple prongs are used.

Dubai: The process and function is similar to Abu Dhabi, you will be connected by the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) alongside at 1000-2000 AED deposit. Gas is not available through pipes, but you can have it delivered to your home should you choose to. Overall, this is a relatively painless process.

Public Transport:

Abu Dhabi: Buses are air-conditioned and well run. For 2 AED you can access most localities and popular areas. They run every 10 minutes during the day and every 30 late in the night. Regional travel is also available between cities.

Dubai: Abras (ferries) are available for short trips and are quite the experience. Otherwise buses provide good service across the city. However, most prefer taxis, they are metered and fares start at 10 AED.

Climate:

Between the months of May and September the UAE is incredibly hot and an outing is not for the faint of heart. Temperatures can reach as high as 38 degrees Celsius (100F) combined with humidity! Outdoor travel and activity is more limited and dissuaded on especially hot days. The rest of the months provide a moderate climate in which people enjoy nature, the sights, and cities. Overall it is tropical and arid for most of the year. You should be wary of seasonal sandstorms that can limit visibility to a few metres.

Pets:

The Middle East has differing attitudes towards pets than we do in the west. As there are many stray animals they are more so seen as a nuisance than a lovable friend. The climate is not conducive to a healthy pet either, further exacerbated by the limited areas in which you can take your dog for an outing, and even less so for off the leash activities. Animals are not allowed in many places including the beach, you should always check before you decide to go for a walk. Be wary of a practice in which poison is laid out for strays, this is not common within residential areas but may occur. Lastly, since there are many homeless animals, we encourage you to adopt once there. Requirements for bringing your pet with you include but are not limited to:

- Good Health Certificate
- Vaccination Certificate
- All pets require a microchip to identify them and must be reflected in the documentation

If you are sure you want to bring a pet, you will find quality veterinarians for all of your needs.

The Little Things:

With so much to consider it is easy to forget the little things. These are far too many to list so do be thorough in your research! This guide is a great starting point and if you do choose to work with Douglas Scott, we'll make sure that you've got all your bases covered. Otherwise, we wish you luck on this new and exciting journey!



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